

The Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee offered the following substitute to SB 511:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

To amend Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 8 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions relative to solid waste management, so as to change certain provisions relating to declaration of policy and legislative intent relative to solid waste management; to change certain provisions relating to permits for solid waste or special solid waste handling, disposal, or thermal treatment technology facilities and inspection of solid waste generators; to change certain provisions relating to yard trimmings disposal restrictions; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

**SECTION 1.**

Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 8 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions relative to solid waste management, is amended by revising subsection (g) of Code Section 12-8-21, relating to declaration of policy and legislative intent relative to solid waste management, as follows:

"(g) It is further the intent of the General Assembly to provide a frame of reference for the state and all counties, municipal corporations, and solid waste management authorities in the state relating to the handling of yard trimmings. Disposal and decomposition of vegetative waste and other yard trimmings in a lined municipal solid waste landfill having a landfill gas collection system in operation directed to a beneficial use of landfill gas such as electrical power generation, industrial end use, or similar beneficial reuse is a use of yard trimmings that promotes renewable energy goals, protects the environment, and confers a substantial public benefit. Therefore, collection and disposal of municipal waste together with yard trimmings at such municipal solid waste landfills should be allowed while composting and other current methods for handling and disposal of yard trimmings continue to be utilized. Likewise, the The productivity of the soils of Georgia requires that nature's way of recycling vegetative matter be respected and followed ~~and that; therefore,~~ such essential building materials ~~are no longer wasted by being buried in landfills but are~~

should continue to be allowed to be returned to the soil. The General Assembly, therefore, adopts and recommends the following hierarchy methods for handling yard trimmings:

- (1) Naturalized, low-maintenance landscaping requiring little or no cutting;
- (2) Grass cycling by mowing it high and letting it lie;
- (3) Return to the soil or other beneficial reuse on the site where the material was grown, including but not limited to:

- ~~(3)~~(A) Stacking branches into brush piles for use as wildlife habitats and for gradual decomposition into the soil;
- ~~(4)~~(B) Composting on the site where the material was grown, followed by incorporation of the finished compost into the soil at that site; or
- ~~(5)~~(C) Chipping woody material on the site where such material was generated;
- ~~(6)~~(4) Collecting yard trimmings and transporting them to another site to be:
  - (A) Chipped ~~chipped~~ or composted for later use as fiber fuel, mulch, or other beneficial use; and
  - (B) Disposed in a lined landfill having an active permitted gas collection system by which landfill gas is directed to equipment or facilities for purposes of electrical power generation, industrial end use, or other beneficial use promoting renewable energy goals; or
  - (C) Any other method that does not violate the restrictions provided by paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section 12-8-40.2; or
- ~~(7)~~(5) Chipping woody material for later use as fiber fuel."

## SECTION 2.

Said part is further amended by revising paragraph (1) of subsection (e) of Code Section 12-8-24, relating to permits for solid waste or special solid waste handling, disposal, or thermal treatment technology facilities and inspection of solid waste generators, as follows:

"(e)(1)(A) As used in this paragraph, the term 'recovered materials processing facility' shall, in addition to the meaning of paragraph (26) of Code Section 12-8-22, include processing operations for materials consisting of concrete, asphalt, cardboard, or yard trimmings or similar wood wastes diverted from the waste stream for the recycling or other beneficial reuse of such materials.

(B) The director may suspend, modify, or revoke any permit issued pursuant to this Code section if the holder of the permit is found to be in violation of any of the permit conditions or any order of the director or fails to perform solid waste handling in accordance with this part or rules promulgated under this part.

(C)(i) The director may modify any permit issued pursuant to this Code section in accordance with rules promulgated by the board. All modifications of existing permits shall be classified by the board as either major or minor modifications.

(ii) All modifications of existing permits to allow vertical or horizontal expansion of existing disposal facilities, except a facility operated by a utility regulated by the Public Service Commission, shall be classified as major permit modifications and shall not be granted by the director sooner than three years from the date any such facility commenced operation; provided, however, that a permit may be modified by the director to allow a vertical or horizontal expansion one time within three years from the date the facility commenced operation so long as the capacity of the facility is not increased more than 10 percent.

(iii) Modifications of permits for existing municipal solid waste disposal facilities for the addition at such facility of a recovered materials processing facility shall be classified as minor permit modifications, provided the location of such facility complies with the same buffer requirements applicable to the disposal facility. Such materials shall be reported at the disposal facility separately from waste materials destined for disposal. Operators of such disposal facilities may report to the Department of Community Affairs on an annual basis the total amounts of such materials diverted from landfill disposal.

(iv) The disposal facility permit holder shall provide written notification to the chief elected official of the jurisdiction in which the facility is located at least 30 days prior to starting any recycling operation for materials consisting of concrete, asphalt, or yard trimmings or similar wood waste to be diverted from the waste stream for recycling or other beneficial use. This notification shall include an indication of whether or not the ten-year demonstrated capacity of the landfill will be reduced. The permit holder shall comply with all applicable local zoning ordinances. If necessary to satisfy local solid waste planning and reporting requirements, disposal facility operators may be required by the county, municipality, or solid waste management authority for the jurisdiction in which the disposal facility is located to report the total amounts of such materials diverted from landfill disposal."

### SECTION 3.

Said part is further amended by revising Code Section 12-8-40.2, relating to yard trimmings disposal restrictions, as follows:

94 "12-8-40.2.

95 (a) Each city, county, or solid waste management authority shall impose restrictions on  
96 yard trimmings which are generated in or may ultimately be disposed of in its area of  
97 jurisdiction. These restrictions shall include but are not limited to:

98 (1) A requirement that yard trimmings not be placed in or mixed with municipal solid  
99 waste, except at landfills restricted to construction or demolition waste or those municipal  
100 solid waste landfills described in subsection (b) of this Code section;

101 (2) A ban on the disposal of yard trimmings at municipal solid waste disposal facilities  
102 having liners and leachate collection systems or requiring vertical expansion ~~within its~~  
103 ~~jurisdiction~~ except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section;

104 (3) A requirement that yard trimmings be sorted and stored for collection in such a  
105 manner as to facilitate collection, composting, or other handling; and

106 (4) A requirement that yard trimmings be sorted and stockpiled or chipped, composted,  
107 used as mulch, or otherwise beneficially reused or recycled to the maximum extent  
108 feasible.

109 ~~(b)(1) Prior to September 1, 1996, each city, county, and solid waste authority is~~  
110 ~~authorized but not required to impose restrictions on yard trimmings which are generated~~  
111 ~~or may ultimately be disposed of in its area of jurisdiction. Such restrictions may include,~~  
112 ~~but are not limited to, the restrictions stated in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection~~  
113 ~~(a) of this Code section. The provisions of subsection (a) of this Code section~~  
114 ~~notwithstanding, each city, county, or solid waste management authority shall allow, but~~  
115 ~~not require, the disposal of yard trimmings otherwise destined for a construction and~~  
116 ~~demolition or inert landfill at any municipal solid waste disposal facility in its area of~~  
117 ~~jurisdiction that has a liner and a landfill gas collection system in operation by which~~  
118 ~~landfill gas is directed to any equipment, system, or facility for beneficial use, including~~  
119 ~~but not limited to use for generation of electrical power or industrial use. The operator~~  
120 ~~of such a facility may receive and process yard trimmings at the site for disposal where~~  
121 ~~such landfill operates a gas collection system that provides landfill gas generation or~~  
122 ~~other beneficial use of the gas. The addition of yard trimmings for disposal, chipping, or~~  
123 ~~other processing operation at such site shall be subject to approval by the director through~~  
124 ~~the issuance of a minor modification to the solid waste handling permit for such facility.~~

125 (2) If the granting of the minor permit modification impairs the ability of the facility to  
126 fulfill the capacity assurances previously issued to local governments, the facility shall  
127 notify the impacted local governments within 30 days of receiving the permit  
128 amendment.

129 (3) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, the governing authority of  
130 a local political subdivision in which a municipal solid waste disposal facility otherwise

subject to this subsection is located may enact an ordinance prohibiting the disposal of yard trimmings at such facility.

(4) Except as provided in this subsection, lined municipal solid waste landfills shall be prohibited from accepting the disposal of yard trimmings.

(c) The Board of Natural Resources is authorized to develop guidelines to assist local governing authorities and others in the orderly stockpiling of yard trimmings at suitable sites, the chipping and composting of yard trimmings, ~~and~~ the distribution of the products resulting from such chipping and composting, and the disposal of yard trimmings in municipal solid waste landfills as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section to promote the beneficial use of landfill gas as a source of energy."

#### SECTION 4.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.